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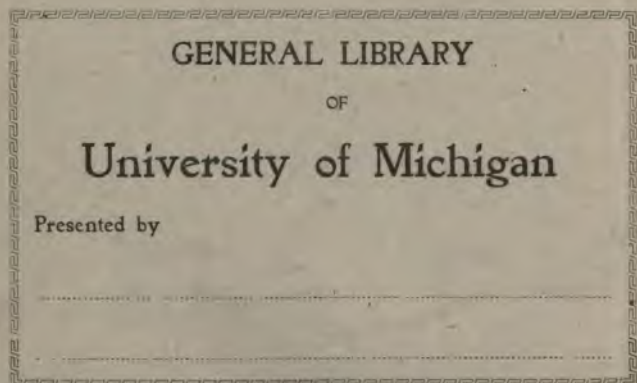
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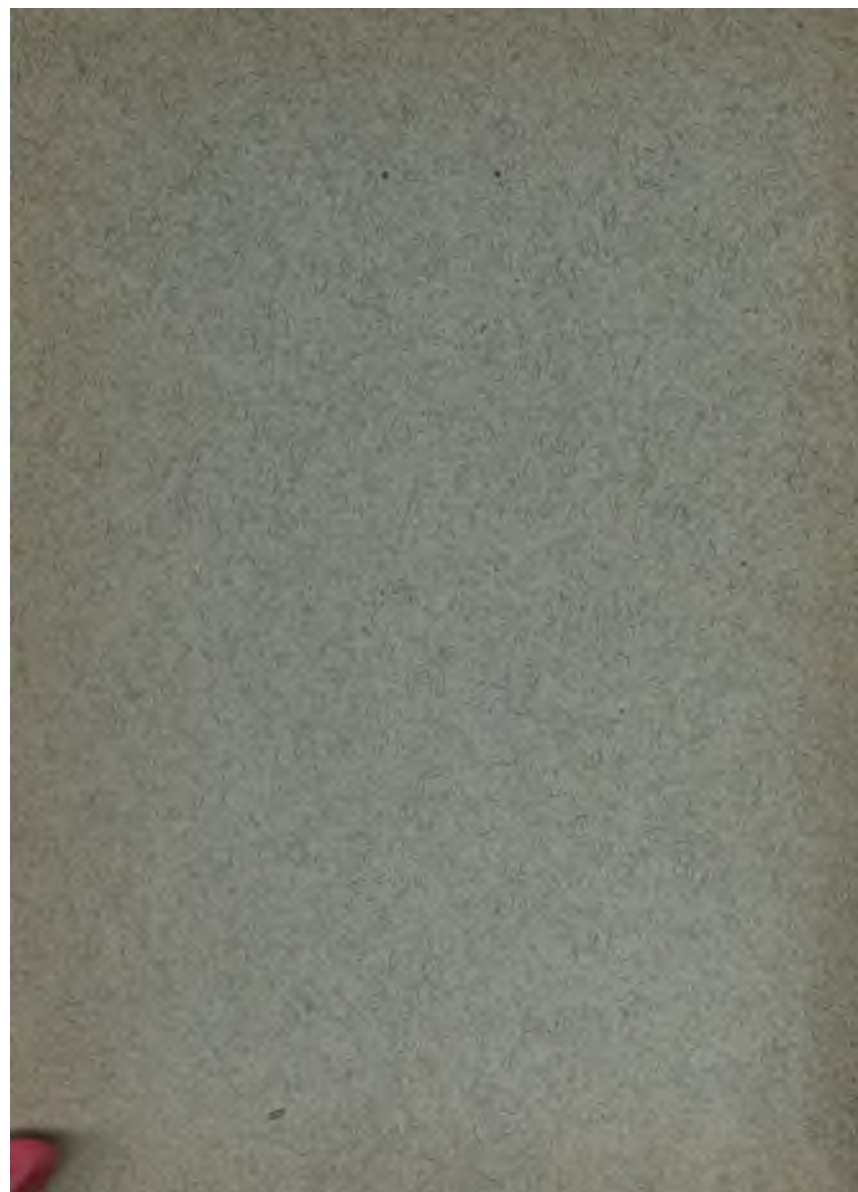
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1881

# TOWN HALL SUGGESTIONS

## AN ADDRESS

AT THE

OPENING OF A NEW CITY HALL, XENIA, OHIO

FEBRUARY 16, 1881

BY

WHITELAW REID



NEW-YORK

HENRY HOLT & COMPANY

1881



XENIA, OHIO,  
January 19, 1881.

WHITELAW REID, Esq., New-York.

*My Dear Sir :* I have the honor to transmit herewith an official copy of a resolution passed by a unanimous vote of our City Council at last meeting. Our City Hall (or Opera House) will be ready for opening somewhere about the 10th to the 15th February. Hoping to hear from you at an early date, I have the honor to be, very respectfully, your obedient servant,

JOHN A. HIVLING,  
*Chairman Committee on Public Buildings,  
City Council, Xenia, Ohio.*

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*Resolved by the City Council of the City of Xenia :*

That Whitelaw Reid, Esq., Editor of THE NEW-YORK TRIBUNE, be invited to be present at the re-opening of our City Hall, and to deliver such an address as he may deem appropriate to the occasion; and that any surplus remaining after payment of expenses be given for the relief of the poor; and that the Mayor of the City and Committee on Public Buildings are hereby appointed a Committee of Arrangements to carry the foregoing resolution into effect.

C. H. PUTNAM,  
*President City Council.*

*Adopted January 18, 1881*

*Attest: C. L. MAXWELL  
City Clerk.*





# TOWN HALL SUGGESTIONS.

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## AN ADDRESS

AT THE

OPENING OF THE NEW CITY HALL, XENIA, OHIO.

FEBRUARY 16TH, 1881.

First of all, let me make you my best acknowledgments, for the most gratifying honor of my life. To come back to the dear old town which in my boyhood treated me so much better than I deserved, and around which centre my earliest and happiest recollections, is always a pleasure;—to come, an absent son, summoned by your city government for this occasion, is more than a pleasure—it is a grateful duty.

We have been hearing, however, of late, that it is no longer quite prudent to make public confession of the fact that one was born in Ohio. It is growing to be a political crime, a sort of pleading guilty to political disability. The fault, you will observe, is not entirely in living here; it attaches even to the error of having been so inconsiderate as to be born here.

Massachusetts, a few years ago, might people half the legislatures and executive chambers of the Northwest, and crowd their delegations in Congress, and gather in the prizes of half the diplomatic service; and nobody objected. It only added to the glory of the Puritan commonwealth that stood there on her bays, and spoke for herself. Virginia might fill offices with similar frequency on lines of emigration a little further South, and it only added to the pride of the whole country in what they delighted to call the Old Dominion, the Mother of Presidents. But when her greatest offspring, the first-born of the Ordinance of 1787, became the Mother of Presidents too, and when *her* wandering sons, in turn, came to the front, all over the Union, in war, or politics, or business, the feeling seemed suddenly to change. A huge detective society was forthwith formed, whose duty was not only to note with disparagement every advance of an Ohio man, but to ferret out and to "spot" every advancing man in any other State who could be suspected of having been born in Ohio. When found, the order

was simple and peremptory: "Hunt him down."

Well, with the changed conditions of our local emigration, that becomes something of an undertaking. Forty years ago the chief native source of supply for the hardy settlers who toiled Westward in the old Conestoga wagons,

Who crossed the prairies, as of old  
Their fathers crossed the sea,  
To make the West, as they the East,  
The homestead of the free,

was in New-England, and particularly in Massachusetts. For the past fifteen or twenty years it has been in Ohio. There is no land into which their lines have not gone. There is no State or Territory to the westward Ohio emigrants have not largely helped to people. Call over the familiar names of the pioneer families of Greene County, and see where you will find their living representatives. Take the Gallows, the Townsleys, the Kyles, the Turnbells, the Harbines, the Baughmans, the McCoys, the Colliers, the Gowdys, the Shields, the Sterretts, the Deans, the Collinses, the Puter-

baughs, the Hivlings, the Nisongers, the Snyders, the Ankenys, the Barbers, the McMillans, the Millers, the Bells, the Corrys, the Stevensons, the Laugheads, the Whitemans, the McHattons, the Maxwells, the Armstrongs, the McClungs,—what one is there that has not more members in the West than here at the old home? “You can take your horse and buggy,” said one of our emigrants, “on the banks of the Miami, and drive to the base of the Rocky Mountains, stopping every night at an Ohio man’s house.”

So the huge detective society, of which we spoke, has plenty of work on its hands. For wherever this Ohio emigrant went, he carried with him the Ohio basis—education, manliness, self-reliance, enterprise—in a word, the Ohio blood—and he made his way. One day an Ohio emigrant turns up in the Senate from Kansas, the next, in the Supreme Court from Georgia, the next in some other conspicuous place he has fairly earned and to which the people of his adopted State help advance him; but every time the detective society groans and

hoots and exclaims: "Another Ohio man in office—is nobody else to have a show? Hit his head. Never mind where he spent his life or what he has done; he was born in Ohio!" And yet the truth is that if Ohio were to be represented as Massachusetts and Virginia have been, she has not nearly offices enough! A comparison in appointments is difficult; but one as to elections may easily be made. Go no further back than the beginning of this political period—say about the time the Republican party arose—and take the representation in Congress. In 1856 there were in the two houses twenty-three men of Virginia birth, fourteen from Massachusetts, and, notwithstanding her size, only twenty from Ohio. To-day there are still twenty-one of Virginia birth, thirteen from Massachusetts, and thirty-five from Ohio. But if Ohio were to be represented merely in proportion to population, as Virginia was in 1856, she should still have thirteen more! If in proportion not only to her size, but to the quality of her product, perhaps we ought modestly to refrain from saying how many more

;

yet it would be fortunate for the country to get her to furnish!

A friend of mine recently received a dispatch about which there has been some talk. It congratulated him on his election to the Senate because he had never apologized for being "a Stalwart." Well, here is a wandering Ohioan who has never apologized and never means to apologize for his birth-place.

The tools to those that can use them. If you don't like men of Ohio birth in public life, find better men, and persuade the people that they are better. But don't resort to the puerile course of condemning them merely because of their birth—breaking their heads because they were once within the prohibited lines of longitude. There have been times when one's being an Ohioan was not an objection to his serving the State. When you had Edwin M. Stanton as Secretary of War, and Ben Wade as Chairman of the Committee on the Conduct of the War, and John Sherman as Chairman of the Finance Committee, was there anybody uneasy, anybody less than grateful, that the noblest Roman

RECEIVED

of them all, Salmon P. Chase, was at the same time Secretary of the Treasury! When you had Grant at the head of one army, nobody wanted to drive Sherman away from another, because he also was born in Ohio. Even Sheridan was forgiven the offence of his birth-place; and McPherson was mourned as sincerely as if he had not been another of those pushing Ohioans. When Gillmore was bombarding Fort Sumter, and revolutionizing our artillery practice and coast defence, his birth in Ohio was not thought to injure the range of his projectiles; and when Steedman and Garfield, political foes, but brothers in patriotic devotion, left a disheartened chief and rode without orders toward the sound of the enemy's cannon, till through fire and blood they found the Rock of Chickamauga, the Nation in its gratitude for their heroism quite overlooked the crime of their birth.

And so, once again, let us fall back upon the motto of the great Scotchman so recently gone from us: "The tools to him that can use them." If you want fewer of these Ohioans in promi-



nent places, match them! Or surpass them! Till then, why not frankly recognize the position of the great State that produced them, the centre of the National population, the focus and very flower of its freest, manliest development. Peopled mainly by Massachusetts and Virginia influences, of the best, most adventurous and self-reliant types, it nourished a population strongly marked by the most desirable characteristics of this dual origin, and it holds, because it deserves, the legitimate successorship to both, in its present place at the National Council Board, and in the physical and the intellectual strife of the Continent.

Why Virginia and Massachusetts were able to assert and so long maintain their leadership, our historians have fairly shown. Why the power and place of both should have passed so unmistakably and conspicuously to the "territory Northwest of the Ohio, and the Connecticut Reserve," some Western Buckle may yet find it a most interesting study to trace.

He would note the fine mingling of races—the

first actual blending of the Virginia and Massachusetts strains, with a strong infusion of the sturdy Scotch-Irish from over the Pennsylvania border. He would appreciate the gain in climate to each—the winters permitting greater activity than in New-England, but not encouraging the laxity of more Southern regions. He would observe not only the fertility of the soil, but the boundless mineral resources that almost compelled a more varied industry. And having thus recognized three of the notable four classes of physical agents to which the philosophical historian of civilization referred all the external phenomena by which the development of man has been permanently affected, he would not fail also to find in the fourth, or “the general aspect of nature,” an equal significance. We do not sufficiently appreciate the total difference between the stern face nature showed the hardy pioneers in Ohio and the easier dandling she gave to the less strenuous sons of the prairie. Here was no marking out the lines of a farm with a furrow, to be followed by an immediate entry upon its cultivation.

The land was covered with dark and pathless forests. It was threaded by rivers, the Muskingum, the Scioto, the Miami, the Maumee, which were the first means, and yet the most dangerous, for penetrating the wilderness. Their banks were lined by the bravest Indians of the West, the tribes that rallied around Logan and Tecumseh, the Wyandots, the Cherokees, the Delawares; and the Shawnees, the last of whom, at their capital in your own county, scarcely four miles from where we stand, achieved the distinction of holding as their prisoner the most famous pioneer of the West, Daniel Boone himself. There were no railroads to bring the luxuries of civilization to the frontiersman's cabin. You can track the emigration across the plains by the lines of empty fruit cans and the bottles that once held—let us hope—Apollinaris water. But you could track the pioneers through the white oak and black walnut forests of Ohio only by the blaze of the tomahawk on the trees, the marks of the struggle with bear or panther, the sadder marks that told, too often, of the Indian am-

bush. There were no telegraphs, as now, in many of our frontier settlements, to keep them feeling the throbbing pulses of a feverish world outside; no newspapers to distract them with the daily records of crime the world over; scarcely even an occasional mail to bring a three months' old letter from wife or sweetheart left behind. They lived isolated lives, in the heart of the forest, fighting nature and fighting the Indians.

Sobered by these severe surroundings, nerved by these difficulties, purified by these deprivations, this mingled strain of Puritan, Cavalier and Scotch-Irishman bred in the forests and on the clearings between the river and the lake, the self-reliant race that has given this State its place in the Republic. Whether she can maintain it or not, who can tell? Emigration is draining away her best blood, as it did that of Virginia and Massachusetts; and it does not always happen that under the luxuries of an older civilization the children emulate the high virtues of their hardy ancestry. But whatever the future may have in store, we can say of our

State, our gracious Mother, as Webster said of Massachusetts, the Past at least is secure. The place she has she has earned.

Nor does there seem any immediate danger of her losing it. None of us, whatever our politics, are hanging our heads for the Administration that is just drawing to a close. Whether we approve its policy or not, we agree that under it we have come to unprecedented prosperity; that our business has been well and honestly managed; that the public service is clean, and the public faith untarnished. It has indeed given us peace with honor; and the man whom you three times chose Governor retires from a most difficult Presidency, upon which he entered amid universal prophecies of failure, far more popular with the whole country than when he was elected, and with the reasonable certainty that twenty years hence, when the petty grudges of the disappointed are forgotten, his Administration will be reckoned by both parties one of the most creditable and fortunate in our history.

Two years ago, before the Convention of Ohio

Editors, I ventured the prediction that, whichever party succeeded, the next President too would be an Ohio man. One party missed its opportunity by failing to choose the one man, clean, incorruptible, able, patriotic, whom it had a fair chance to elect. So of course, when Henry B. Payne, of Cleveland, was not nominated by the Democrats, there was nothing for the country to do but elect the distinguished citizen of Mentor, who had been nominated by the Republicans. Now, a little further in advance, let us hazard another non-partisan prediction, and challenge the horror of the society for the detection and exposure of Ohioans, by declaring that the State which has given the country Grant and Hayes and Garfield, will once more furnish the President in 1884!

We shall all be happy over it, too. Ohioans rarely lose the State pride and the personal satisfaction in a success worthily won by a fellow-citizen that make your politics dignified, and even the fiercest of your political battles measurably free from petty meanness. It was from political opponents, charmed by a chivalric

courtesy never lost in the sharpest struggles, that Senator Pendleton fairly earned that most complimentary and agreeable of political sobriquets, "Gentleman George." When Henry B. Payne came promptly forward at the beginning of a feverish Presidential campaign, to say that he utterly scouted the charges against James A. Garfield, because he knew him thoroughly, and, though a vehement political foe, had implicit trust in his personal honor, he gave the true type of Ohio politics and Ohio manliness. Long may his tribe increase; and long may all the parties in the dear old State continue to put such men at the front.

But all this while we have been thinking about our State. What we are more concerned with to-night is our city. That name may be used now, no doubt, without reproach;—its gloss is a little worn off. But having helped to get this City charter, I remember being quizzed, by a neighboring and unneighborly newspaper, for having found ways to use the new title fifty-seven times in a sin-

gle issue of the paper, the week afterwards. Admonished by the old experience, I shall be careful not to speak of the City of Xenia too often to-night.

Indeed, as one looks around, he may be permitted to wonder whether he is in the old town at all. This isn't the way we did things, in my time, in Xenia. McMillan Hall was the best we had then, and we were careful to keep that under, or rather over, good moral influences, by putting it in the loft, with one end resting on *The Torch-Light* office, and the other on the local depository of the American Bible Society. Now we are met to open a new City Hall, and it takes the form of this elegant Opera House, as big as some of the New-York theatres and a great deal prettier than many of them. What would Joseph Vance and the pioneers who, with him, laid out the town, have said if, before their eyes closed forever on these lovely slopes they found in the wilderness, they had been invited to attend a town meeting in this hall! Even I, so young a



resident that I have hardly yet recovered from the disgrace of having been detected, (by one of the dear old ladies of the town, with a painfully precise recollection of dates,) in editing a political newspaper and exhorting people how to vote before I was old enough to vote myself,—even I am forced to rub my eyes to be sure that all this is real. A theatre—in Xenia!—with folding chairs,—and a dress circle,—and galleries,—and good stage scenery,—and, above all, this portrait of Shakespeare—it passes belief. Why I remember a lad here, of ten or eleven years of age, coddled too much perhaps by anxious parents and a physician, who was told he must quit studying so hard, and take to light reading. Light reading was a phrase not well understood in sober families in Greene County in those days, and so the lad asked for particulars. “Oh, any light thing you please,” answered the physician; “take Shakespeare!” The next week came along a Doctor of another school, a Boanerges of the faith, Dr. McMaster, over whose more

distinguished son you have lately been rearing a memorial shaft, on the peaceful hillside, beyond the Shawnee. According to the fashion of the day, the lad was promptly "examined," and after Catechism and Psalm Book and Latin declensions, followed questions of books. The advice about light reading thus came out. "Very bad advice," groaned the good Doctor, "a very bad lesson for a boy. But what light reading have you?" Then Shakespeare was confessed and the horror was complete. "To think," exclaimed the Doctor, "of the son of so good a man wasting his time and corrupting his mind with that frivolous and profane writer of plays!" And so Shakespeare was summarily taken away, and in its place light reading was furnished in the shape of Rollin's Ancient History, in eight volumes! Not till nearly a year later did a kinder fate and a younger clergyman, your own sainted McMillan, substitute Plutarch's Lives and the Percy Anecdotes! And now, in this same place, after a special act of the

Legislature, and an overwhelming vote of the people, you have built your new Town Hall in the guise of an Opera House, and as you entered to-night the drop-curtain faced you, with the portrait of Shakespeare above it!

Well, it is a public-spirited enterprise, worthily executed by your faithful official servants. You have your Town Hall and Opera House. What are you going to do with it? Doubtless it shows that this community no longer regards life as simply a struggle, but is willing to be entertained and even amused, as well as instructed.

The amusements will be sure to come. Let us only hope that they will be up to the intellectual and moral level of a county second in these regards to none in the State or the Nation. Of what passes for oratory, too, you will be sure to have an abundance, and we may well hope that, while you are about it, you will get the best. Even then, the intellectual treats this platform may bring you will not

surpass the memories of your youth. This community has been used to the eloquence of Henry Clay and Thomas Ewing and Thomas Corwin. It has heard in turbulent times the fiery appeals of another, whose courage and force even his bitterest foes had to recognize, Clement L. Vallandigham. Under the trees before the Court House it heard Salmon P. Chase end an impassioned defence of the Free Soilers against disunion charges with the outburst: "We in Ohio are accustomed to look on the Union of these States as we look on the broad arch of Heaven above us, undissolved and indissoluble." I have listened to nearly every prominent orator of the country in this generation; and have yet to hear nobler eloquence than resounded in the Court-Room yonder when Thomas Corwin rescued from a Calvinistic jury, who believed that murder deserved hanging, an Irish manslayer from Bellbrook;—or more persuasive teaching than fell from the lips of our Yellow Springs neighbor, Horace Mann. You give your speakers a

finer platform now ;—match the old eloquence if you can.

Let us hope, too, that amid these more elegant surroundings you will still keep up the good old wholesome Greene County respect for politics; and that your Opera House will not wean you away from that careful attention to political discussion,—and discussion on both sides, too,—which used to centre about a Town Hall. I wonder if among the disappearing traditions of pioneer Xenia there has yet faded out all recollection of the way the last jurymen in the old log Court House in 1804 were sworn. Arthur St. Clair came up from Cincinnati, with cocked hat and sword, to serve as Prosecuting Attorney. The story ran that he hunted in vain for a Bible, but at last found something he thought would do, and upon it jury and witnesses “took their Bible oath.” The volume turned out to be a tattered copy of the Arabian Nights’ Entertainments. In my boyish days in politics

here, when things went wrong, when a candidate broke his pledges or an 'out-township ally was found to have deceived us and worked for the other man, it was the irreverent and rather vulgar habit to say that our politicians anyway were lineal descendants of Arthur St. Clair's witnesses, and their oaths were no better. Let us dignify, not degrade politics. Let us realize—may this Town Hall perpetually teach,—that to “go into politics” is to deal with the highest objects of human concern; and that the pretended feeling of contempt for those who do, merely because they do, which grows fashionable now, is the sure sign of a snob. Next to the ministry of God the highest career open to human ambition is the service of the people.

This place ought, besides, to become the centre and incitement for some special intellectual stir, in the community, from the community, and about the im-

mediate concerns of the community. It should stimulate what we may call a real municipal life. Till you have that you lack the best gift of our republican institutions. These are not the best form of government because they insure the best immediate results,—because they are the cheapest or the simplest or the most efficient. They are the best because you have to work for them, and work to keep them, and be perpetually active in running them. They are what you make them; and are the best because in the making of them you yourselves are exercised and trained and built up to the best measure of free, American manhood. Government by the people must always be expensive, generally slow, and, in the main, only carried on through the strain of a perpetual excitement and tumult of debate. But therein lies the very secret of its superiority. It is not the mere reaching the goal that helps the athlete;—what does him the real benefit is his running the race. It is not simply the

gathering of the crops that makes the farmer's life the best; it is the work of growing them. It is not the Government you get that makes Republicanism the best; it is the work you have in getting it. And till you bestow that work on your own municipal affairs you are not getting as much out of the great privilege of Republican institutions as you ought to get.

Rightly used to stimulate and develop a true municipal life, this Hall may likewise give you some other mode of dealing with affairs besides the newspapers; and perhaps I may be permitted to say that the tendency to let these do all your thinking in public affairs is not an unmixed good. Useful as they always must be in their place, and unsurpassed in their sphere as the journals of Xenia certainly are, it is just as well to avoid entire dependence upon them for municipal discussion. So too, in the atmosphere of spirited inquiry which we may hope the influences centring here will develop, should come broader views of life and duty;—a recognition of the fact that something



can often be said on the other side;—a wider toleration than is always common in rural communities, of what other people think, and of their right to think it, in politics, education, temperance or religion. ✓

On some special topics this Town Hall should never be silent. I may venture to name three. It should keep the municipal attention fixed with ceaseless watchfulness on questions of Public Morals, of Municipal Taxation and Indebtedness, and of Educational Necessities.

On the first of these there is no need to dwell in Xenia. Here, if anywhere in Ohio, that is the one topic sure never to be neglected. To the second your attention may not have been so faithfully called.

The growth of municipal taxation and municipal indebtedness is in fact one of the stealthiest and most seductive of our foes. Governor Dennison once told me he was a great believer in the wisdom of a young man's running in debt—and my worst enemy couldn't

deny that I practised faithfully on his advice! Half the municipalities of the country seem to have the same notion, and they don't limit the time for running in debt to their youth, either. Six years ago Senator Blaine estimated the municipal debt of the country at five hundred and seventy millions, and that of the counties at one hundred and eighty millions more. The exhibit startled the Country. General Walker, the Superintendent of the Census, is taking the utmost care now to develop the latest facts upon the subject. To the officer in special charge of the investigation, the Hon. Robert P. Porter, of Chicago, I am indebted for a summary of what has already been ascertained. He says:

The Census of 1870 was, as you doubtless know, sadly defective, as the office at Washington could not, under the old Census law, deal directly with the officials of the cities, counties, villages and towns, and school districts throughout the country. This I am attempting to do in the present investigation. There are in the United States 330 cities with a population of 7,500 and upward, and there are no less than 6,016 incorporated towns and villages with a population of less than 7,500. making a total

of 6,346 incorporated towns and villages which have to be dealt with directly from this office. The above calculation does not include the New-England States, Pennsylvania, Illinois and Indiana. Where the township has a financial existence we deal with the township, and the number of townships in the three States I have referred to is 4,000, making an estimated total of 11,846 cities, towns and townships, to say nothing of the 2,700 counties of the country, all of which have to be dealt with separately. But these statistics will not be completed until we have returns from all the school districts, numbering, at a rough guess, between 70,000 and 80,000 divisions, to the financial officers of which schedules have been sent and a correspondence opened. I give these facts that you may be the better able to appreciate the immense detail involved in the collection of these statistics.

When the present investigation is ended I shall be able to show a complete analysis of this vast amount of local indebtedness, which will reach to nearly **\$900,000,000**, comprising an exhibit of the purposes for which it was contracted, the amounts contracted each year from 1860 to the close of 1880, the amounts maturing each year from 1880 to 1900, and the rates of interest they bear. I have already complete returns from all but some 200 of the towns of 1,000 population and upward.

Nine hundred millions of local debts, county, village and city, wholly outside of all the State and National indebtedness! The figures

are almost appalling. And yet this is only the part of the extravagant local expenditure which you haven't paid for. What has been paid, the rapidly rising tax rate shows. Note the figures in this suggestive extract from the report of the Hon. R. B. Strang, Chairman of the Commission to devise a plan for the government of the cities of Pennsylvania. He said:

Without referring to particular cities or making invidious distinctions, it is perhaps sufficient to say that a carefully prepared table, showing the increase of population, valuation, taxation and indebtedness of fifteen of the principal cities of the United States, from 1860 to 1875, exhibits the following result:

Increase in population.....	70.5 per cent
Increase in taxable valuation.....	156.9 per cent
Increase in debt.....	270.9 per cent
Increase in taxation.....	363.2 per cent

It must be borne in mind that this alarming increase in debt and taxation occurred during a period of great apparent National prosperity, when money was plenty, when property commanded enormous values, and when it was easier to apply the maxim "pay as you go" than at any period in our National history.

And now let us bring the examination into a narrower compass. In a paper by Simon

Sterne, intended to show substantially that universal suffrage in large cities is a failure, the figures are collated showing the population, taxation and indebtedness of five cities, in 1860 and in 1875. I omit the details and will read you merely the respective percentages of increase in these fifteen years:

	Popula- tion.	Taxa- tion.	Indebted- ness.
Brooklyn.....	82.7	313.4	356.9
New-York.....	28.5	430.9	504.1
Philadelphia.....	30.6	317.8	152.3
Providence.....	98.7	443.3	529.8
Newark.....	65.2	558.8	2,658.2

This system extends over the whole country. In most cases the figures are not so startling; and yet it has been but a little while since two cities, one near New-York, another in the South, became openly bankrupt—the debts being said to be actually greater than the taxable property;—while in more than one Western county we have had the distinct repudiation of bonds for indebtedness which nobody disputed, solely because the county thought it couldn't tax heavily enough to provide the interest, without driving off its population!

Let me give you only one more contrast in figures. In 1875 the amount raised by the New-York civic government was \$35 for each man, woman and child within the boundaries,—while the immense and luxurious city of London taxed its inhabitants only \$10 each!

I waste no time in enforcing upon an audience like this the significance of such alarming facts. It is enough to state two or three obvious conclusions :—

- (1.) Such municipal indebtedness tends to promote wanton extravagance in public affairs.
- (2.) It tends to demoralize private life.
- (3.) It tends to weaken the sense of public honor.

There was a third topic on which it was thought that the influence of this Hall should keep the municipal attention fixed—the direction of your educational necessities. No thoughtful observer has failed to notice the growing discontent, especially in heavily-taxed communities, with some features of the existing system. It tries to teach too much. It teaches

little thoroughly. In giving a smattering of a multitude of subjects, it neglects the essentials. It unfits boys for mechanics and manufacturers, without fitting them for the professions. Its tendency is to make them discontented with the country where they are wanted, and to lure them to the cities where they strive in vain to find a place in ranks already over-crowded. It reduces the producers. It over-educates great numbers for the only work they can do, at the expense of taxpayers, who are only damaged by the result of the expenditure.

These are among the current objections. Doubtless they overstate the case, but they do point to a dangerous discontent, and they do centre about one undeniable weakness. It is true that the system is top-heavy;—that the basis is too flimsy for the ever-spreading superstructure. As a result we turn out too many who will go through life ignorant of Arithmetic because they have spent their time on Chemistry, deficient in English Grammar because they were laboring with Latin or

French. And it is true that this flashy shell of an education dissatisfies many with the real work of their lives.

Meantime what is the chief defect to be found throughout the whole working of our industrial system? Is it not just what such an education has absolutely organized,—a chronic, inbred lack of thoroughness? Who learns a trade now, as the apprentices did fifty years ago? What master workman is able to get apprentices? In what trade do the men of middle-age find the average workman as thoroughly master of all its details as he was when they first began to be employers? In what one is there a supply of boys coming up under such training as surely to make them the full equals of the old hands?

Well, what is the remedy? Obviously nothing will restore the old conditions. All over England and America the apprenticeship system seems doomed, and as yet there are only glimmerings of something that may come to take its place.

Here then are three grave facts:—



Common schools too wide to be deep enough;—

A growing lack of thoroughness in the industrial world;—and

A growing discontent on the part of the heavier tax-payers with an educational system that somehow doesn't seem to them to produce what is just suited either to the trades or to business and the professions.

Does not the mere grouping of the facts suggest the remedy? Strengthen the basis of the school system before you increase the superstructure. Teach fewer things, but teach them so they will be absolutely known. Make the course of study more compact and manageable; postpone the accomplishments; banish even science and drawing, and first give the child what will be essential for the practical business of life, and a basis for self-improvement.

Then meet the obvious want by establishing, in county seats, or wherever the population is large enough to warrant it, free or partly free Industrial schools. There teach your science,

your drawing, and whatever else may tend to make better artisans. In the great cities extend the system to free Technical schools, such as are now beginning in New-York, where boys may learn the principles, and even some of the practical detail of the trades,—of painting, of carriage-building, of plumbing and the like. This is the plan to which England is already largely resorting, which has long been established in France, Germany, Belgium, Switzerland, Sweden, and to which we must soon come. The multitude of common schools may thus be freed from a work they cannot do properly, while the attempt to do it spoils the work they can and should do. In such a system, says Professor Huxley, is to be found the only available remedy for the losses from the downfall of apprenticeship. To such a system one of the shrewdest of our United States Consuls, in a recent unpublished report, traces the growing success of certain important branches of British manufactures. To such a system some of our own statesmen are beginning to look for the surest means of de-

veloping our native industries, and checking the unwholesome tendency away from the trades, into trade.

Since the foregoing was prepared the State Department has received and I have been permitted to examine a most interesting report on the progress of technical schools in England, and particularly those in textile fabrics at Bradford and through the West Riding, from the Hon. C. O. Shepard, the alert United States Consul at Bradford. After reciting the endowments, income, and other provision for a large number of these schools, the numbers of pupils in attendance, and the specific results attained, he summarizes his conclusions in a statement which I have been permitted to copy, and which I shall venture to read to you :

Let me add a few remarks as to the objects of technical schools and the best means of securing them.

(1.) They are intended to supplement the education of the ordinary school with an education specially calculated to increase a man's knowledge of his trade or business, and so to make him a more use-

ful member of society and a larger contributor to the Nation's wealth.

(2.) They should, in my opinion, form a part of the National system of education, and the scholars should largely consist of boys and girls drafted from our public elementary schools. I include girls because I believe that no system of technical education will be complete which does not make provision for their training. In all art schools girls take a very high place, and it is my opinion that greater facilities ought to be afforded them for earning a livelihood by the use of their artistic taste and acquirements in relation to all trades or manufactures in which a designer's skill is required. This will apply particularly to the manufacture of fancy stationery, pottery, and every variety of textile fabrics.

(3.) The course of instruction should include lectures by competent men upon subjects of technical interest, such as the daily discoveries of science afford.

(4.) Arrangements should be made in connection with every school for granting certificates or diplomas to deserving students, and every care should be taken in the election of the Board of Examiners and the choice of subjects and questions to make the examinations fairly severe, and such as to give the certificate or diploma real value to its possessor.

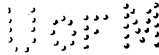
(5.) Examination in technological subjects might be adopted by the educational department of any State in the event of its undertaking to carry on the work of technical education, and would no doubt be found of great practical value.

I am glad to know that a few technical schools have already been established in the United States, principally in the engineering and iron trades. I earnestly hope ere long to hear that a system of thorough technical education has been adopted for the whole country, as I do not know of any other means whereby the resources of the Nation are more likely to be developed, or its manufactures improved, than by increasing the knowledge and perfecting the skill of its artisans. English manufacturers acknowledge that their most successful rivals are in those countries or localities where technical education has been carried to the highest point.

I take the greater pleasure in being able to give you this early access to an important public document because from an independent point of view and across the ocean, it comes as a confirmation of the suggestions already offered. The whole idea is yet in its infancy, but there is at least reason to believe that the next great advance in our educational system will give us fewer studies and more thoroughness in our common schools, with separate Industrial schools for some of the excluded branches; and whether this be a correct or mistaken forecast, it is clear that no

worthier or more important question can challenge the discussion and watchful attention which it is one of the functions of the Town Hall to stimulate.

One thing more. Here is the place to revive your local history, watch your wandering sons, and keep green the early memories. Here would be the perfect field for some worthy successor, if you only had one, to the lamented William Mills. Here you might fitly recall the fact that the foremost literary editor of America, William D. Howells, was once a Greene County boy, his father living a few miles to the westward of Xenia, at what were then called the Eureka Mills; that the foremost sculptor of America, J. Q. A. Ward, was born only a little way out of the Miami Valley, to the north of us, at Urbana; that another president of the National Academy, the admirable landscape artist, Worthington Whittredge, was born in the Valley, a few miles from Clifton in this



County. And you keep with you still a real poet, whom you need to chide, because, having given such charming proof of what he can do, Mr. Coates Kinney now persistently defrauds the world of the further work he ought to do.

Here, too, should be told over the fast fading story of the heroism and devotion of your sons in the war. Do not let this younger generation forget that the first field officer given to death for the Union, from Ohio, was John W. Lowe, the first Colonel this town sent out, and that he fell as you would have had him fall, sword in hand, in front of his regiment, cheering them to the advance upon the entrenched army of Floyd and Wise. Do not let them forget the political leaders you followed before the war, Harlan and Gest and Hivling, and, before them all, Joshua Martin. Do not let them forget the good fellows of your earlier political activity. The echoes in the Town Hall of Xenia should still linger lovingly on the names of John Boyd and John McWhirk and

Albert Galloway. Teach them the pure fame of your old lawyers and officials, Ellsberry, and Barlow, and Winans, and Scott, and Coke Wright. Teach them to revere those devoted public servants who left their indelible impress on the education and morals of this community, the old clergy of the town, Beveridge, Smart, McMillan, Armstrong, Gill, Simmons, Steele. Above all, teach them to hold in everlasting honor the memory of the men who found this County a wilderness and left it to you a magnificent heritage, the fairest in our eyes the sun kisses between the river and the lake. Honor and reverence for the virtues of our Pioneers, the settlers of 1800-1810—Kentuckians, Virginians, Pennsylvanians, who fought the Indian and the wild beast, felled the forest, built first a church and then a Court-house, lived hard and solitary lives, but with courage and constancy, in their place, nobly served their day and generation. A few of them, with whitening locks and rugged faces, seamed with the privations and struggles of three-quarters of a century ago, still go in



